WOMAN IN MUSIC

LOUIS C. ELSON

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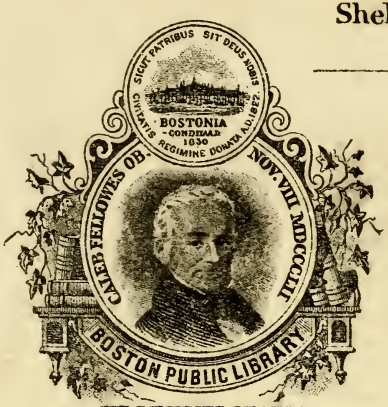

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WOMAN IN MUSIC

By

LOUIS C. ELSON

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1918

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PREFACE

SOME time ago I was requested to write a series of short articles on this much-neglected subject for "The Mother's Magazine." The more I investigated the topic the wider it grew, and the present volume and a subsequent study of Children in Music were expanded from this initiative. In America the work of women in music has an especial interest, because the absence of all prejudice against women composers has led to a larger number of female writers of music than is possessed by any other country.

The universality of music study in the United States has resulted in the fact that almost all American children are somewhat in touch with the art, and it is rare to find any young miss who has not some practical knowledge of at least the piano.

The widespread influence of the Musical Courses in our Public Schools—much more general than in any foreign country—has furthered this musical activity. The only cause for regret is that these school courses

deal too largely with actual singing and not enough with a study of Musical Appreciation, while the technical studies are far too much given to the pianoforte, to the exclusion of almost all other instruments. The glory of ensemble playing is as yet too much in the background in American family life. Perhaps this little volume may impel some of its fair readers to make their piano work a foundation for a deeper study and an attempt on the creative side of the Art.

LOUIS C. ELSON.

BOSTON, MASS.,
September, 1918.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	v
I.	ANCIENT INFLUENCES	1
II.	THE WIVES OF COMPOSERS — BEETHOVEN AND FEMALE INSPIRATION	11
III.	FEMALE INSPIRATION—SCHUBERT, SPOHR AND WEBER	19
IV.	THE AFFECTIONS OF CHOPIN AND BERLIOZ	31
V.	EMINENT WOMEN ACTIVE IN MUSIC: MUSICAL QUEENS	51
VI.	FEMALE COMPOSERS — FANNY MENDELSSOHN AND CLARA SCHUMANN	65
VII.	OTHER EUROPEAN FEMALE COMPOSERS	83
VIII.	WOMEN COMPOSERS OF AMERICA	91

WOMAN IN MUSIC

I

ANCIENT INFLUENCES

ALTHOUGH millions of young ladies have studied music more or less thoroughly during the past two or three centuries, there is as yet no female figure as prominent in musical creation as Rosa Bonheur in painting, or George Eliot in literature. I have often questioned eminent teachers and composers as to their views of this matter and their opinions as to the cause of the apparent male supremacy.

Svendsen, the famous Norwegian, stated that he found the girl student much more teachable than the boy, up to a certain point. The girl, he said, had a quicker perception of the meaning of the composition and always caught the points of its interpretation more readily. When it came to individualizing, and more especially to creating new musical thoughts, he found a distinct slow-

ing-up, and that here the male student of talent would forge ahead perceptibly.

Reinecke, for a long time the head of the Leipsic Conservatory and the leader of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, should certainly be entitled to an opinion, not only because he trained thousands, but because he had ten daughters of his own, and his opinion almost exactly coincided with that of Svendsen. I shall show in later chapters why I venture to differ from these authorities, and why I believe that a great woman composer may soon arise.

Let us first examine what influence has been exerted by women upon the recognized masters of composition. It will form a fitting preamble to the study of woman's actual musical achievement that is to follow.

* * *

In the days of the troubadours and minnesingers, from about 1200 to 1450, a great change took place in the appreciation of womanhood in France and Germany. Woman had been degraded to an unjustly low position, but was now elevated to an exaggeratedly high one. She became the

queen to whom all homage was due, the arbiter of fate, the ruler of kings. She inspired music and poetry to an unlimited degree.

Walther von der Vogelweide sang of the women of his native land all through his wanderings in foreign climes. Once he burst forth with the sentiment—

> Many lands have I seen
> And many ladies fine,
> Yet none are like the German dames
> With form so divine.

Which did honor to his loyalty, even if we may doubt the question of "form." Henry of Meissen never wrote a poem or sang a song that had not for its topic the idealization of German womanhood. They changed his very name to *Frauenlob*, "Homage to Women." When he died, the noble dames of Germany came to his funeral at Mainz in such numbers that when they threw in their rosebuds and poured their libation of wine into the open grave it overflowed with the numerous tributes.

In France, too, women inspired the troubadours to numerous songs. There was this

distinction between the minnesinger and the troubadour; the former often sang of the entire sex, praising their gentleness, their fidelity, while the troubadour usually was more specific, choosing some one special object of his devotion and giving all his musical homage to her; praising her beauties with commendable detail, but usually giving her some pastoral pseudonym, as "Amaryllis," "Daphne" or "Chloe." Sometimes there were rather imaginative songs also. I cannot think of anything more fanciful than the affection of Geoffrey Rudel for the Countess of Tripoli. He had never seen her, but the descriptions of knights coming from the East so worked upon his imagination that he indited song after song to his lady. Finally, he plucked up courage and went to Tripoli.

This was dangerous for such an excitable nature as his seems to have been, for when he stepped on shore, the thought that he was now to meet his idol so moved him that he fell down in a swoon. They carried him to a hostelry near by, and the Countess, moved by such intense affection, came to the

room where he lay ill. That was the most dangerous of all, for he now became so overjoyed that he died at once, and the lady erected a monument to his memory.

Sometimes the troubadour sang a song of etiquette to his lady love, and these songs are among the most curious effusions inspired by the women of the Middle Ages—although not by the middle-aged women. In one of these songs of etiquette the singer leaves very little to the imagination; he sings of cleaning the teeth, eating daintily with the fingers (forks had not yet come in) and washing the hands thereafter. In another of these songs the lady has asked her adoring adviser what she shall do, if at a banquet a knight who has taken too much wine should pay her too marked attention. The troubadour advises her, in poetry and tone, to introduce some topic for discussion, to ask the knight if he thinks the Gascon ladies are more beautiful than English ones.

And if he says "The Gascon"
You by the English bide,
But if he says "The English"
Then take the Gascon side.

And he suggests immediately calling some other women in the room to give their judgment in the matter—

> And when they enter in the fight
> You're not alone with this bold knight.

Which is good enough advice even in the twentieth century.

In one of these German songs similar to these *Essenhamens*—as they were called—a lady is advised to study "cooking, sewing, surgery and chess," which will seem a strange combination to many a female reader even if she assents to the first two. The study of surgery was essential in those days. If the lady of the castle was handsome and gracious many a knight would carry a lance in her honor in the tournaments that were so common, and one of these knights might be brought to the castle with a broken arm or a cracked pate. Then the fair chatelaine must be ready to give first aid to the injured. The knowledge of chess was also of use, for many a knight would stay as a guest in the castle for weeks, and if the time hung heavy

on his hands the lady would invite him to play chess with her, usually for a stake.

* * *

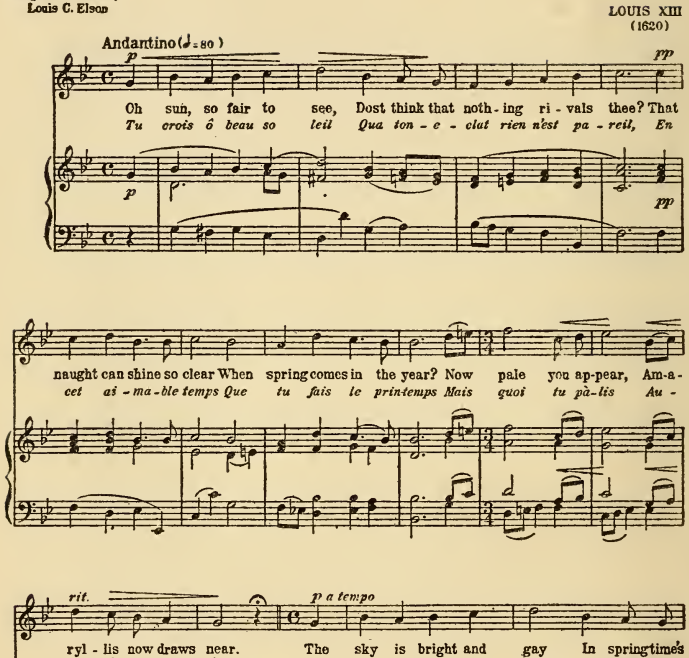
It is a tempting subject and very much more could be said about it, but I have shown that woman influenced music of various kinds in the medieval times. Of the women who actually made music I shall tell in connection with the story of female composers. One belated troubadour may be mentioned here, and the lady who inspired his music. The latter was Madame d'Hauteville, and the singer was Louis XIII. of France.

The reader will at once think of the composition called "Amaryllis" by Louis XIII., arranged by Ghys. This is one of the false compositions in music. Many such exist. "Stradella's Prayer" was not composed by Stradella, but probably by Gluck; Beethoven's "Farewell to the Pianoforte" was not his farewell, nor was it his last composition, but a trivial work in a lady's album, it is thought, and certainly composed long before his death; "Weber's Last Waltz" was not his last waltz, nor his waltz at all, since it

AMARYLLIS

English version by
Louis C. Elson

LOUIS XIII
(1620)



FIRST PAGE OF THE SONG WRITTEN BY LOUIS XIII. IN PRAISE OF MME. D'HAUTEVILLE

The complete song will be found in MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS for Vocalists, Vol. VI, p. 1546.

was composed by Reissiger; and Mozart's celebrated "Twelfth Mass" has probably not a note of Mozart from beginning to end.

In similar manner, "Amaryllis, by Louis XIII.," as it is played on the piano by many young musicians, was not composed by the French king, but by an Italian named Baltazarini before Louis XIII. was born, and it is not "Amaryllis," but was named by its composer "La Clochette," from the fact that a little bell sounded all through the chief theme. Yet, curiously enough, Louis XIII. did write an "Amaryllis," and it was a four-part song in praise of Mme. d'Hautcville, whom he named as above in accordance with the troubadour custom.

II

THE WIVES OF COMPOSERS—BEETHOVEN AND FEMALE INSPIRATION

AS we approach later days we find composers much influenced by their wives or women who won their affection. This was naturally not so much the case in the early days when music was contrapuntal and leaned heavily to the intellectual side. We hear but little of the wives of Palestrina or of Orlando di Lasso, the two earliest really great composers. Nor did the first or second marriage of Bach influence his music greatly save in the fact that as he had twenty-one children and trained most of them in music he must have had a fair-sized orchestra in his own family circle. Handel never married, although it is said two Englishwomen were deeply in love with him. He certainly paid more attention to affairs of the stomach than to affairs of the heart if the caricature published during his lifetime which portrays him with a pig's head, seated at an organ which is garnished

with hams and sausages, be a correct representation.

We may doubt if Mozart or Haydn were influenced by women in the composition of their music. There is an odd similarity in their wooing and wedding. Haydn fell in love with the younger daughter of the wigmaker Keller, but this young lady was deeply religious and soon became a nun. Keller, *père*, did not wish to lose so promising a son-in-law—for Haydn was then a permanent orchestral director in the household of Prince Nicolas Esterházy—and therefore he urged him to take the elder sister instead, which he did. She led him a furious dance the rest of his life. When he was beginning to win a larger income in London, she wrote to him urging the purchase of a certain dwelling in Vienna, "which will just suit me when I am a widow!" The house was not bought, but a separation was finally achieved.

Mozart's courtship began in much the same way. He fell in love with a daughter of a musician named Weber, in Mannheim. But Aloysia Weber was piqued when, at the command of his father, the young Mozart

left for Paris. She presented him with a prophetic gift, at parting—a pair of mittens —and soon after she married an actor named Lange, whereupon Mozart transferred his affections to her sister Constance, whom he married. It was not an unhappy match, yet Constance Mozart was a wretched helpmate for a struggling composer. The pair spent money when they had it, and tried to borrow when they had none. The name of Constance Mozart can only be directly associated with one composition of the master, the overture to "Don Giovanni."

The opera had been announced, rehearsed, and was to be given the next day, but Mozart had delayed writing the overture until the very last minute. At last, within twenty-four hours of the performance, he began work upon it. To refresh him during moments of rest, Constance sat by him and told him all the gossip of the neighborhood. The boy from the opera house came for each page of the score as it was completed, and rushed with it to the copyist, that the different instruments might have their parts in time. Sometimes an hour of sleep was sand-

wiched in, and Constance sat by to wake the composer when it was necessary to resume the task. Sometimes, too, it is said, she brewed him a stimulant of which he was fond.

The haste with which the work was written may be shown by the fact that there was no time for a rehearsal, and Mozart, who conducted the first performance, was obliged to say to the musicians—"Gentlemen of the brasses, I fear that I have written either six measures too many or too few in your part, but watch me carefully and it will come out all right."

The overture was played, and proved to be a masterpiece, and a few over-sapient critics claim to be able to detect the very places where the composer went to sleep and was waked up again! So much to Constance's credit.

It stands against Constance Mozart that, being somewhat ill on the day of his funeral, she did not go to Mozart's grave, which was one of the common receiving tombs and shared with others. Nor did she visit it when

she got well. She subsequently married Baron von Nissen, and it was about ten years later that von Nissen suggested to her that it might be well for them to try to find the grave of Mozart. It was then too late. The old sexton had died, and there was no record of where the body had been laid. It has never been discovered. Constance outlived her second husband and died, quite well-to-do, at eighty years of age.

Nor was Mozart himself so very poverty-stricken as some of the musical histories would have us believe. He was improvident, and continually borrowing money which he seldom repaid, but here is a letter to his wife, written October 7th, 1791, very near the end of his life (Krehbiel's translation), when she had gone to Baden for her ill health.

"As soon as you were gone I played two games of billiards with Herr von Mozart [himself], who wrote the opera for Schickaneder's Theatre; then I sold my nag for fourteen ducats; then I had Joseph call my *primus* [a janitor valet] and bring a cup of black coffee, to which I smoked a glorious pipe of tobacco. . . . What do I see! What

do I smell! It is the *primus* with a cutlet. Gusto! I eat to your health!"

Billiards, coffee, a "nag," tobacco, a semi-valet, a meat supper. These are not signs of pressing poverty!

It is only when we come to Beethoven that we begin to find the female influence exerted directly upon the works of a great tone-master. Beethoven was continually falling in love. As each fall was entirely platonic, and led to noble music, the world may be glad he was so susceptible. Beethoven had the loftiest ideal of pure womanhood. He longed for some great-minded companion to stimulate the best that was in him. There was a long procession of those who awakened his muse. In his youngest days it was Eleonora von Breuning, whose brother and mother were close friends, and who taught him the beauties of German literature. The guidance of this noble and well-educated woman undoubtedly influenced his later compositions in a large degree. It is, however, a pity she did not include Shakespeare in her curriculum, since no one could have set that poet to music as well as Beethoven.

He was in love with the Countess Erdödy, if his letter beginning "Liebe, liebe, liebe, liebe, Gräfin," counts for anything, and he dedicated Op. 70, two trios, and Op. 102, two sonatas, to her. The Countess Babette von Keglevics ruled his heart for some time, as the piano sonata, Op. 7, may show. Bettina Brentano, and the Baroness von Ertmann also had their influence and were duly translated into tones.

The seventh and eighth symphonies, the brightest of his entire series, were an outcome of his courtship of Amalia Seebald, a charming singer, who seems to have been very fond of him. Why no marriage ensued is something of a mystery, yet the episode crystallized in two of the most charming tone-poems in the world: the eighth symphony being the most exquisite embodiment of humor, while the seventh is, at least to me, the most perfect of Beethoven's symphonies.

But there was one affection which seems to have been deeper and stronger than all the others put together. This was revealed by two letters, found after his death, in a secret drawer in Beethoven's desk. These breathe

a fervor that is almost volcanic. We do not know to whom they were addressed. Many believe that it was Giuletta Guicciardi, but Beethoven seemed to allude to her with marked indifference at a later epoch of his life. The fact remains that the great sonata, Op. 27, No. 2, which is called "The Moonlight Sonata," is dedicated to Giuletta Guicciardi. The name "Moonlight" was never given by Beethoven to the work, and the silly story about his wandering in the forest and improvising for a blind girl, is one of the gushy, sentimental fictions of music, but the fact remains that one may readily imagine this work a direct inspiration of passion.

Beethoven's later notes seem to show that a painting of a woman at prayer had inspired the work. It is possible that various influences were at work here, and it is also possible that Beethoven, who was very shy and sensitive, did not care to wear his heart on his sleeve and to reveal all about this romantic work. The influence of woman upon the later composers was not less marked than in the case of Beethoven, and the details can be yet more definitely traced.

III

FEMALE INSPIRATION—SCHUBERT, SPOHR AND WEBER

IT is a question how much Schubert was influenced by female surroundings. His music was something that bubbled up spontaneously and needed no external stimulus. We come nearest to the divine fount of inspiration in the works of Schubert. People who are not trained in music have an utterly false idea of how a composer achieves his work. In the first place, a real master of tones does not use any instrument while he is thinking out a composition. Mozart said he always composed best while playing billiards. Stephen C. Foster, the famous writer of American folk songs, used to seek inspiration by riding up and down Broadway in a five-cent 'bus. Beethoven did his greatest musical work during long walks, jotting down his ideas in a memorandum book.

If we compare the Beethoven ideas as found in some of these memorandum books which have been preserved, with the works

as finally printed, we find most striking changes, most marked improvements, showing that the original inspiration was not accepted by him.

In Schubert we find one great instance of spontaneous composition. He wrote the splendid setting of "Hark, Hark, the Lark," from Shakespeare's "Cymbeline," on the back of a bill-of-fare, in an open-air restaurant just outside of Vienna while waiting for his breakfast one Sunday morning. He jumped out of bed one night and wrote out "The Trout," and spilled a lot of ink on the manuscript afterward while he was half asleep. He composed best when he was unhappy, and once said the public seemed to like best those songs which were wrung from his adversity. Unfortunately too often

> The anguish of the singer
> Makes the beauty of the strain.

One looks in vain for female influence here, either to crush his heart or to uplift it. We have been thus minute in describing Schubert and his work because of an apocryphal story told in many musical histories.

When he was teacher in the family of Prince Esterhazy, at Zelesz in Hungary, he fell in love, the story runs, with Countess Caroline Esterhazy, one of the Prince's daughters whom he taught. One day she asked him why, among his numerous dedications, he had never dedicated a single composition to her. "Because," was the reply, "all that I achieve is dedicated to you!"

We are sorry to throw doubt on so pretty a tale, but if Schubert had dared say that to a countess in the early nineteenth century, he would certainly have been thrown out of the castle. Countess Caroline never mentioned this incident. She married Count Von Crenneville, "and lived happily ever afterward." The chief point to be made against the story is the fact that Schubert did dedicate a piece to the Countess, the Fantasie in F minor for piano duet (Op. 103) which was published after his death. This work is so inferior to most of his compositions that we cannot by any stretch of fancy imagine it to be the tribute of a secret and lifelong devotion. Unfortunately, musical history is full of such false anecdotes.

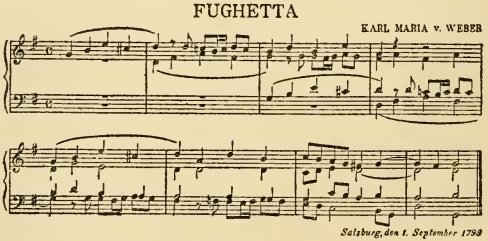
A much more direct and traceable female influence is found in the case of Louis Spohr, a composer who is unjustly neglected in recent days. Spohr began violin study at five years of age, and at six was able to take part in chamber concerts. He began to compose when he was six. In 1805 he became conductor at the court of Gotha. While there he met and married a charming young harp player named Dorette Scheidler. A better match could not have been imagined. Spohr was the leading violinist of Germany, and Dorette Scheidler probably the best harpist. A great change had just taken place in the harp. This instrument, which had been used for thousands of years, had always been a diatonic one, requiring retuning at certain changes of key. In 1810 Erard invented a system, in use to-day, of double-action pedals, by which each string could be tuned instantly as flat, natural or sharp, and this gave the harp entrance into all keys.

With the new instrument, and with his new wife, Spohr began a series of concerts in which there was both conjugal and musi-

cal partnership. Harp and violin duets, and works in which these instruments were employed with orchestra, were produced by him copiously, and concert tours were made through many countries. It may be of interest to state here that Spohr was probably the first conductor to lead regularly with a baton. The use of a short stick in directing is scarcely one hundred years old.

It is in the life of Carl Maria von Weber that we find a more elevating example of female influence than a musical partnership. To understand what a noble, womanly nature accomplished in this instance we must know something of the career and nature of Weber before he met Caroline Brandt. His father was a scion of a noble family, and financial counselor to the Archbishop of Cologne. But he was a selfish and dissipated character and although "financial counselor," he took mighty little heed to his own finances, being a sad spendthrift. The son was a delicate child, afflicted with hip disease from birth, unable to walk at four years of age. At that age he was able to sing and to play the piano with amazing

ability. In my companion work, "Children in Music," one will find how Beethoven's father tried to make a money-making prodigy of his son, inspired thereto by the example of Mozart. Weber's father attempted something of the same sort. In spite of the irregularity of life entailed by this injudicious proceeding, the lad received some fairly good musical training. Beethoven, who had emphatic quarrels with Weber, has misled many musical historians by say-



FUGHETTA BY WEBER

Composed at the Age of Eleven

ing of him—"He studied music so late that he never attained more than the art of pleasing." We disprove this statement by print-

ing herewith a fughetta in excellent counterpoint which was one of six which the boy composed when he was eleven years old.

* * *

But it was a vagrant life at the best that the boy lived. His constant theatrical associations often produced a footlight flavor in his music which can be discerned even in his sonatas. His youth was full of escapades. He became an official—not musical—at the court of Stuttgart and the dissipated life here almost wrecked his career before it had fairly begun. The King of Würtemberg often quarreled with the young secretary of his brother's household. Once, after a stormy interview with the king, young Weber met a peasant woman in the ante-chamber who inquired of him as to where she could find the royal washerwoman. "In there," responded Weber, pointing to the king's chamber, and in she went. Weber went into imprisonment to pay for his audacity. Finally the Weber family, including the father, was banished forever from Würtemberg.

Then came theatrical life, and in the

course of this the meeting with the singer, Caroline Brandt, whom Weber brought from Vienna to Prague to sing in the opera company which he directed there. There was much affection on both sides, even from the beginning. Fraulein Brandt was at first unwilling to sacrifice her promising career to become the wife of such a wandering troubadour as Weber. Once, indeed, she attempted to disentangle the bonds which bound them, and wrote to Weber that they had better part. Weber's response was bitter enough, for he accused her of only estimating art as a means of getting soup, meat and shirts.

This lover's quarrel soon blew over and when Weber returned to Prague his faithful Caroline announced herself willing to wait until he should have attained a fixed position that would enable him to support a household. This position soon came.

Weber was appointed operatic conductor in Prague for life. Not long afterward marriage followed, and then a very successful concert tour as a honeymoon.

Weber's married life was one of absolute and entire happiness. It enabled him to bear

the many trials which always beset an operatic manager in a small European city. Caroline Brandt, too, became greater because of this marriage. She had been a favorite of the public and a spoiled child of the theatrical world. She now became an earnest domestic helper and merged herself entirely into her husband's career; and that career grew astonishingly greater. Prague was soon left behind and Germany witnessed the great triumphs that were to come in Weber's short life. All the great operas that Weber wrote came during his married life and, it is no exaggeration to say, because of it. His whole existence seems to have been bound up in the happiness of his wife and children.

They shared the tremendous triumph of "Der Freischütz." The dissipated, spendthrift wastrel had vanished, and in his place there was a true man, loving art and idolizing his family. The final act of Weber's life shows this devotion most pathetically.

London had come under the spell of his operas and wished to see the great master. An offer of a thousand pounds came from the Covent Garden Opera House for an opera

composed to an English text, to be performed in London and conducted by the composer.

Weber was now far gone in consumption and knew well the danger of the task, but he wanted above all things to provide for his wife and family. Dr. Hedenus was consulted about the trip to England. "If you give up composing and conducting, and take a vacation in Italy, you may live five or six years yet. If you go to London you may not live as many weeks," was the emphatic reply. "As God wills," said Weber, and then began studying English that he might make the opera of "Oberon" more thorough.

The London performance was a great success. Weber's contract was that he should conduct the first twelve representations and this he carried out loyally. But his strength was ebbing fast and suddenly a dire premonition that the end was near came upon him. Quick preparations were made for the return journey, for Weber had a great longing to see his family once more. It was too late. On the morning of the fifth of June, 1826, they found him dead in his bed, in the house of his host, Sir George Smart (in Great Port-

land Street, London). Among his papers they found a manuscript which they supposed was his final work, and it was at once published under the title of "Weber's Last Waltz." Many of our readers know it under this title, or as "Weber's Last Thought," but it is not Weber's at all. It was given to him as a souvenir, when he started on his fatal journey, by the composer of it—Reissiger.

A great funeral in London followed Weber's death. All England paid tribute to the great composer. They would have paid still greater tribute, had they known the story we have detailed, to the man who cheerfully laid down his life for those he loved.

IV

THE AFFECTIONS OF CHOPIN AND BERLIOZ

IF the influence of a good woman was clearly marked in the life and musical career of Weber, it was still more so in the compositions of Robert Schumann, but, as Clara Schumann was herself a composer, it will be more fitting to examine her life and influence in the series of women workers in music, which is to follow. The same is true of Fanny Mendelssohn, whose influence was also exerted in this dual manner.

Chopin was strongly under female influence at times, and this was, in his case, not an unmixed blessing. His affection for the young soprano, Constantia Gladkowska, was the immediate cause of some of his music. The natural outpouring of the affection of a musician would seem to be in song, but only Schumann has lived up to this statement, while Chopin was almost entirely devoted to one kind of composition—pianoforte—and is the only one of the great masters who has

thus limited himself. He left a few songs, but these were published only after his death, and they are to a great degree piano works in disguise.

Constantia Gladkowska, when Chopin first met her, was just graduating from the Warsaw Conservatory of Music. Chopin gave concerts with her, wrote reviews in praise of her vocalism, and even before this had embodied his devotion in a musical composition. He writes about her, in a letter dated October 8, 1829, as follows:

"I have, perhaps to my misfortune, already found my ideal, whom I worship faithfully and sincerely. Six months have passed and I have not yet exchanged a syllable with her, although I dream of her every night. My thoughts were with her when I composed the *adagio* of my concerto."

This leads to some confusion. There is no *adagio* in either of his piano concertos. But he used this term indiscriminately for any slow movement, as the French often use the word *andante*. Investigation and comparison of dates leads to the conclusion that the

larghetto of the *F* minor piano concerto was the movement indicated.

Another woman exerted some influence upon Chopin, without, however, exciting the tender passion. This was the Countess Delphine Potocka, to whom he dedicated several of his works. The Countess was a very talented amateur. Kviatkowski says that she took as much trouble with, and pride in her musical *soirées* as other people took in giving successful dinners. She had a beautiful soprano voice. When Chopin was on his deathbed, she sang to him, having hurried from Nice to Paris on hearing the sad news. A famous picture commemorates this deathbed concert. There was another woman who exerted an intense and perhaps evil power over Chopin's life. Of her we shall speak next.

Although Chopin was at one time engaged to Marie Wodzinski this seems not to have had any marked influence upon his career; the engagement was soon broken and Marie married Count Skarbek. But the influence of the great French novelist George Sand (Madame Dudevant), upon his life was of

the most marked character. It would not be the place, in these pages, to re-try the celebrated case of musical history. William H. Hadow, George Eliot, Elizabeth Browning, Matthew Arnold, and other eminent commentators, have held the connection of these two natures to have been nobly platonic and that Madame Dudevant martyred herself in elevating the character and ideals of Chopin. Huneker takes an opposite view. Here is Grenier's description of this remarkable woman:

"She was short and stout and her eyes attracted attention immediately. They were wonderful eyes, set rather too close together, large, black, very black, but by no means lustrous. They reminded one of velvet and gave a strange, dull, cold look to the face. Those large, fine and tranquil eyes with strong eyebrows over them gave a strength and dignity to her countenance which the lower part of the face seemed to contradict. The nose was rather thick, the mouth coarse, chin small."

It was with this great woman that Chopin went to Majorca, when her son, Maurice, was

ill. Chopin was ill himself, and what with bad weather, chilliness, and dreary surroundings, the invalid must have been rather a burden to Madame Dudevant. One can read the details of all this in her "History of My Life," for, if she inspired some music in Chopin, he furnished her with considerable copy for her writings and novels. She once said, "Chopin is a detestable invalid," and the remark was undoubtedly true. In her novel of "Lucrezia Floriani," George Sand has drawn a picture—rather a caricature—of Chopin as Prince Karol.

But there is one piece of Chopin's music which George Sand was unintentionally instrumental in producing. It came after the pair had quarreled at Nohant. Chopin returned to his room in Paris, and, seating himself at the piano, began to improvise. He generally composed at the keyboard, which other great masters very seldom did. As he improvised he says that he seemed to see the folding doors swing apart and the nobility of Poland march by his piano. The richly dressed aristocratic dames, the lordly cavaliers, the troops going out to war, all seemed

passing by. He grew terrified at his own vision and finally rushed from the room into the street. But he afterward wrote out this composition which was evolved under such nervous strain. It was probably the polonaise in A, known as the "Military Polonaise," although some authorities identify the work as the "A-flat Polonaise," and consider the repeating bass figure of four descending notes, in the middle part of this composition, as being the portrayal of the tramp of the cavalry marching to battle.

* * *

Berlioz, the great French composer, who was, with Liszt, the pioneer of the modern school of program music, was tremendously influenced by a woman, in two of his greatest works. It is a strange love story, the one which culminated in the "Symphonie Fantastique" and the "Romeo and Juliet" symphony. Berlioz was very poor and very ambitious. In his youth he had already suffered much, for he was entering a musical career with only the reluctant acquiescence of his father, and with the ardent opposition

of Cherubini, who was at the head of the Paris Conservatoire, where he was studying, and who could not understand the romantic modern school of composition in the least degree.

On the evening of September 11, 1827, the young composer went to a performance of Shakespeare, at the Odéon, in Paris. The chief actress was an Irish woman named Harriet Constance Smithson (Henrietta Smithson), and the play was "Hamlet." The young man was at once enamored of the *Ophelia*. Four days later he saw the actress again, this time as *Juliet*. Then a great, an overwhelming passion entered his breast. It is said that he then and there declared that the *Juliet* should become his wife, and that upon the play he would write his greatest musical work. He has denied this story, but the fact remains that his movement picturing the balcony scene is his most tender composition, and the one which he valued highest among all his works.

However, the "Symphonie Fantastique" is the more important work. It is not only the most graphic tone picture in the whole

repertory, but it is the most definite love letter that was ever written in tones. The five movements portray the story of a young artist who has fallen hopelessly in love and who in his despair attempts suicide by taking opium. (The father of Berlioz was an opium eater.) It does not kill him, but causes this dream:

First Movement. The Obsession by the Passion of Love. Here a love theme is introduced that runs all through the work.

Second Movement. A Ball. In the midst of the revelry the lover still dreams of his beloved.

Third Movement. In the Fields. The young lover hears a shepherd and shepherdess breathing their soft avowals. A thunderstorm ensues and the shepherdess is killed by a bolt.

Fourth Movement. March to Punishment. The lover in a fit of jealous rage has killed his sweetheart and is being led to the guillotine. The menacing crowd around the tumbril, the pause at the scaffold, the last thought of the condemned man, of his beloved whom he has slain, the fall of the ax, the quivering corpse, are all relentlessly given. But even this is not the end.

Fifth Movement. A weird last movement pictures the soul of the murderer arriving in

the infernal regions. Here everything that was good and noble in his love is derided and parodied.

There was a strange alteration in this love letter, for Berlioz heard many slanders about Miss Smithson while she was in London, and he parodied her and turned her character to baseness in this strange finale. The slanders were disproved, and before Miss Smithson heard the work the heroine in the symphony was restored to nobility.

The seemingly impossible actually happened. Miss Smithson had an accident which retired her from the stage. The young composer became more famous, and finally they were affianced and at last were married. It is a pity that we cannot add that "they lived happily ever after." Madame Berlioz became insanely jealous as Berlioz's passion became gradually calmer. It was so notoriously wretched a partnership that the poet Heine, always satirical and often malicious, suggested that Berlioz probably wrote the "March to Punishment" for his own wedding. The passions are all stilled now, the actors are dust, but the musical love-letter

remains imperishable in the concert repertoire.

* * *

In the case of Wagner we can also find female influence exerting strong power in some of his compositions. It is only recently that Wagner is coming to be judged dispassionately by musical historians and even yet there are virulent partisans who are cloaking and concealing many of his undeniable faults. We must bear in mind that the artistic temperament does not always imply morality or unselfishness. No amount of whitewashing will take away the stain of his separation from Minna Planer, Wagner's first wife, who sacrificed her entire career to his comfort.

The uncomplaining devotion of this first wife can scarcely be exaggerated. During the Paris days of poverty she trudged about seeking and obtaining loans for her husband (a Wagnerian loan was practically a gift), she took in lodgers in their humble apartments, she blacked the boots of husband and lodger, and she sewed and washed and

drudged, only to be set aside when the days of prosperity came, and when she objected to her husband seeking inspiration from the wives of other men. Such inspiration he found in Mathilde Wesendonck, who was the chief factor in bringing forth "Tristan and Isolde."

But the reader should imagine two distinct Wagners, almost a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: "Wagner the Little" and "Wagner the Great." The latter it was who never forsook his highest ideal in art; who worked a quarter of a century upon a great music drama ("The Ring of the Nibelungs") without the hope of ever seeing it given, and wrote to a friend, "If I live to complete it I shall have lived gloriously, and if I die before it is finished I shall have died for something beautiful." It must be acknowledged that poor Minna Planer could not grasp such an ideal. If the reader seeks to discover more about "Wagner the Little," Ernest Newman's recent "Wagner as Man and Artist," Kapp's "Richard Wagner und die Frauen," and Praeger's "Wagner as I Knew Him," will present the seamy side. It is possible

that Bernard Shaw, in "The Doctor's Dilemma," pictured this Wagnerian double nature in his character of the unscrupulous artist. It is much pleasanter to dwell upon the loftier side of Wagner's nature.

The second wife of Wagner was Cosima, the daughter of Liszt. She had been the wife of Wagner's friend and supporter, Hans von Bülow, but Wagner won her away from her husband. If any happiness can be justified that is founded upon the unhappiness of others, one may dismiss the lonely and deserted Minna Planer and the tortured Von Bülow from the mind, and confess that the happiness of the Wagner pair was ideal. Cosima Wagner was a helpmate indeed for her imperative and very erratic husband. She was his secretary; she stood as the buffer between him and troublesome visitors; she was the diplomat who smoothed out many a trouble that was caused by Wagner's impolitic, arrogant and irritating ways; and next to himself, Wagner loved her as well as anything on earth.

Which brings us to another love-letter in instrumental music. The Wagners were liv-

ing in Triebschen, near Lucerne, in 1870. There had been born to them a son, Siegfried Wagner. Cosima's birthday was approaching. She was born on Christmas Day, 1837. Wagner determined to give her a birthday and Christmas gift to commemorate their happiness. He began composing an idyl made up of themes from his opera of "Siegfried," but worked out instrumentally and in an entirely different manner from their use in the opera.

December fourth he gave the score to his friend, Hans Richter, who at once wrote out the parts and set about engaging an orchestra to rehearse the new work. The musicians came to Lucerne secretly on December twenty-fourth and Wagner rehearsed them himself in the Hôtel du Lac. Christmas Day, in 1870, fell on a Sunday, and on that Sabbath morning, quite early, they all came very quietly to the Villa Triebschen. The music desks were noiselessly placed upon the stairs leading up to Madame Wagner's chamber—the family called the "Siegfried Idyl" "stair-music" after that — and then the musicians slipped into the kitchen to tune

up. They took their places, one contrabass and one violoncello at the foot of the stairs, then two horns, one bassoon, two clarinets, an oboe and a flute, two violas, two second violins and two first violins, and, at the very top of the stairs, Wagner with the conductor's baton, ready to lead the work. All this was early in the morning, before there was any chance of the family being up. At 7:30 Wagner stepped into the chamber and handed his wife the following poem, which I have translated rather freely, keeping its loving sentiment intact as far as possible.

Thy sacrifices have my victory gained me,
And to my work have given lofty aim.
In many hours of trial they sustained me,
Till strength and daring to my labor came.
Oft in the land of legend we were dreaming,
Those stories which contain the Teuton's fame,
And when a son upon our lives was beaming,
Siegfried, we felt, must be the hero's name.
For him and thee in tones I now am praising;
What thanks for deeds of Love could better be?
Within my soul the grateful song upraising
Which in this music I have now set free.

And in the cadence I have held united
Siegfried, our dearly cherished son, and thee.
And all the harmonies that I am bringing
But voice the thought that in my heart is ringing.

After handing this poem to his wife Wagner came to his post at the head of the stairs again, and the music began. The musicians were invited to spend the Sunday at the villa and the "Siegfried Idyl" was repeated several times during the day.

The themes of the composition are especially appropriate to their subject, with a tranquil cradle song, and much use of a guiding figure, "Siegfried, the Treasure of the World." Hans Richter, the great conductor, had helped amazingly in bringing this surprise to success. He played the viola in the orchestra, he arranged the orchestra and copied the parts; he rehearsed the men, and, as there were a few measures of trumpet in the work, he borrowed a trumpet from a band man and went to the military barracks every day to practice on the instrument, which was new to him, as he was chiefly a horn player. The daily excursions for this

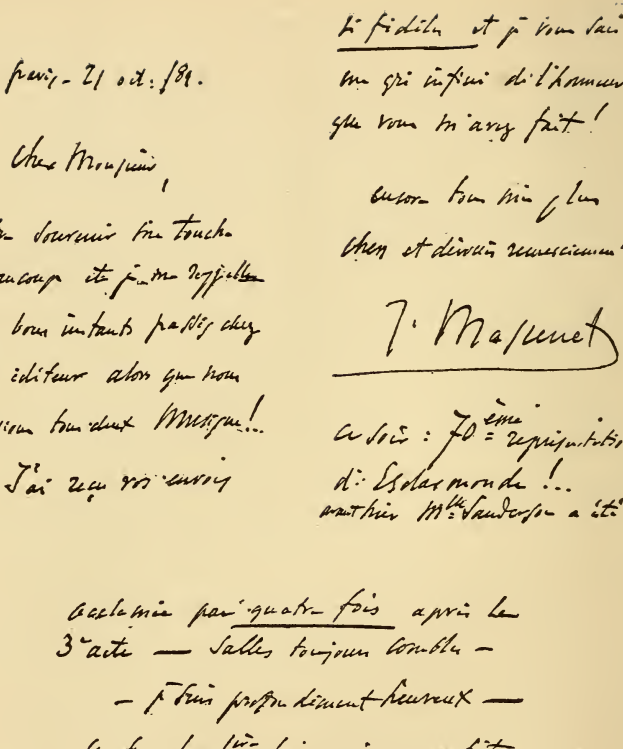
purpose, and to Zurich for some of the band, led Madame Wagner, always keen for her husband's interests, to think that he was growing dilatory in his duties as musical secretary, but it was all cleared up after that Christmas morning.

Cosima Wagner idolized her husband as well. When he died, suddenly, in Venice, in 1883, she was almost bereft of reason. Wagner had always praised her beautiful long hair, and this she cut off and placed in his coffin. Six months after the death of the master I was in Bayreuth at the Wagner home. But still his widow would see no one. Even her father, Franz Liszt, was not allowed in her presence. Only the son Siegfried became her solace in those dark days. Every day, in sunshine or storm, she would sit some hours by the tomb, which is in the garden, just back of Villa Wahnfried, their home. The devotion at times seemed to surpass love and become idolatry.

* * *

Two women, besides these mentioned, have exerted a great influence upon the composi-

tion of music — Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann—but as they were musicians in their own right, and as I am to write of great women musicians later on, I reserve these for a subsequent chapter. I may passingly mention that many great female singers have exerted a direct influence on certain composers. Mendelssohn wrote his "Hear Ye, Israel" in the key of B, because it brought in F sharp very often, and this was a glorious note in Jenny Lind's register, of which the composer was thinking when he wrote the aria. Massenet changed a large part of his "Jongleur de Notre Dame" for the sake of Mary Garden. But Massenet wrote an entire opera because of his admiration of the high notes of the delightful American soprano, Sybil Sanderson. Few Americans have any conception of the beauty of Sybil Sanderson's voice when it was at its best, during her sojourn in Paris. She could then take G in altissimo with purity and ease. Massenet wrote the opera of "Esclarmonde" especially for her, and brought in that G (the Parisians called it the "Tour d'Eiffel note") twice for her especial benefit.



Paris - 21 oct: 89.

Cher Monsieur,

Votre souvenir me touche beaucoup et je me rappelle les bons instants passés chez mon éditeur alors que nous causions tous deux Musique!..

— J'ai reçu vos envois si fidèles et je vous sais un gré infini de l'honneur que vous m'avez fait!

Encore tous mes plus chers et dévoués remerciements

J. Massenet

Ce soir : 70ème représentation de Esclarmonde!..
avant hier Mlle Sanderson a été acclamée par quatre fois après le 3e acte — Salles toujours combles —

— je suis profondément heureux —

Ce sera la 1ère fois qu'une artiste aura chanté une suite non interrompue de représentations et quelle suite!..

bientôt cent fois!! —

Vous savez aussi quel rôle écrasant pour toute autre

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER OF JULES MASSENET

How much Massenet prized the work of our American singer may be judged by the accompanying letter to the author.

V

EMINENT WOMEN ACTIVE IN MUSIC: MUSICAL QUEENS!

IN preceding chapters I have spoken of the influence which woman has exerted upon certain of the great masters of music, and the compositions—often masterpieces—resulting from this inspiration. It is now in order to study what woman herself has accomplished in the field of musical creation. It is true that we may not find as important works as George Eliot or George Sand have produced in literature, or Rosa Bonheur in painting, but we shall nevertheless find much of value evolved by women composers, and we may also find indications which point to a possible female Chopin or Mozart in the future.

In the earliest days of history we find women active in music and even occupying certain fields of art to the exclusion of men. The mourning women, so often alluded to in the Scriptures (Jeremiah 9:17-21, for example) must have been musical and poetic

improvisers something like the "keeners" still to be heard at wakes in some of the remote parts of Ireland. Miriam's song (Exodus 15:20) was improvisational music, and so was that of Deborah (Judges 5).

We must bear in mind, in reading the musical allusions in the Bible, that very much of the ancient music was never written down, but was composed, together with the words, upon the spot. One must also picture the musician of the Bible as giving many expressive gestures along with the singing, for "dancing," in the Scriptural sense, was generally what we would call "dramatic action" to-day. Always imagine a liberal amount of pantomime in picturing Miriam or Deborah giving their music. There is one pictorial proof of this existing upon the wall of a tomb in Thebes (given by Lepsius in his great folio), in which is portrayed a musical conservatory of about 4,000 years ago, most of the students females, and dancing or pantomimic action indicated with each of the vocal lessons. There is not a scrap of written music in the picture, every detail being taught orally.

Ancient Greece gives us the first woman composer—poet and musician were one in those days—in the person of Sappho. She is, however, a vague figure, dating from the beginning of the sixth century B. C.; and even the story of her suicide on account of disappointed love does not bear the test of analysis. But that she wrote beautiful poetry which was chanted to impressive music, and that she taught others, may not be doubted. Corinna, a century later, was also a famous poet-composer and a teacher as well, while Lamia, during the age of Pericles, was the most important female instrumentalist—she was a flute player—of the ancient Greek epoch.

The first musical saint that we find in history is a woman—St. Cecilia—but here, too, everything is vague and doubtful. We are told that she was a noble Roman who, about A. D. 230, was forced to marry a pagan named Valerian; that she succeeded in converting him and his brother to Christianity, and that they all were martyred together in one of the persecutions. As one version gives her demise in the year 176, another in 180,

and a third about 250 A. D., we are forced to conclude that she died a very lingering death; but, as she is said to have united instrumental with vocal music in praising the Lord, Raphael has painted, Dryden rhymed, Maderno sculptured her, and she is regarded as the beginning of female skill in music.

But all the music of the ancient world must have been in a large degree an inspirational affair. It was rather an art than a science, and it is doubtful whether anything more than melody—without harmony or counterpoint—was attempted.

The troubadours and minnesingers, about whom so much has been written, never went beyond mere tune-writing in their compositions. There was, however, a romantic female adjunct to this school of composers, especially in England, in what were called the "glee-maidens." These were minstrels who wandered about the country, composing songs and singing them, sometimes to the people, sometimes to the lords and ladies in a castle, and sometimes even in the courtyards of a monastery to the monks. A goat or dog was often their only guardian or

escort. They usually sang their songs and played the melody on the violin or harp simultaneously.

That they had some standing is shown by the fact that William the Conqueror gave an estate to one of them named Adeline. But the chief figure among these "gleemaidens" comes in the reign of Henry III. This was Marie de France. She was probably born in Brittany, but spent most of her life in England, which was then a decidedly French nation in its aristocracy and court life. Twelve of her songs, in manuscript, are treasured in the British Museum at present. One of them is a setting of the story of "King Arthur and the Round Table," a topic much prized in England. She also set many of Æsop's fables to verse and music. She was familiar with French, English, and Latin, and translated some of her songs from the last-named tongue. But few of the "gleemaidens" had such attainments, and their art gradually tended toward vagabondage.

It was very different with the troubadours, who were the aristocratic secular

composers—always with melody only—of the Middle Ages. There were also female troubadours, although they were by no means so numerous as the male. Probably the most remarkable female composer—in this primitive school—that ever existed, was Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was successively wife of Louis VII of France and Henry II of England. She obtained the permission of Louis VII to accompany him in his crusade, and she headed a company of charmingly armored amazons, chose the route of the expedition, dallied a while in Turkey to try to convert a handsome young emir in the court of Sultan Noureddin, and wrecked the expedition generally. When these amazons left France, they sent their spinning wheels, as a spicy sarcasm, to the knights that stayed at home.

In England Eleanor instituted "courts of love" in which the ladies tried many cases relating to the tender passion, and occasionally formulated such rules as these:

A true lover eats but little.

A true lover grows pale when he sees his sweetheart.

No one can truly love two persons at the same time.

A true lover is always anxious and ill at ease.

Once her court of love debated the question as to whether one could continue to love after marriage, and it is to be regretted that it was decided in the negative. This energetic and highly sentimental queen composed several love songs and had the troubadour's gift of improvisation.

But this simple art of melody-writing soon merged into something greater—the science of composition. The practice of combining melodies, or melody and accompaniment, gradually evolved itself during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and we shall now find real composers among our musical women. Since we have begun, however, with a royal composer, let us cite a few more gifted queen musicians.

The next royal figure after Queen Eleanor who displayed musical tendencies was a rather pathetic one. It was poor Anne Boleyn, who may have charmed Henry VIII with her music—her letters show that she

threw herself at that monarch's head—but the only composition that is now ascribed to her is one which she wrote when she had lost the king's favor and was approaching her doom. It begins:

Oh, Death, rock me asleep.
Bring me to quiet rest;
Let pass my weary, guiltless life
Out of my careful breast.
Toll on the passing bell,
Ring out my doleful knell.
Death doth draw near me.
There is no remedy.

The king's daughters were both musical. Queen Mary played the virginals, which was the primitive predecessor of the piano, a a thin-toned, tinkling instrument of about four octaves compass. Queen Elizabeth counted herself a well-equipped musical critic, although there is considerable doubt regarding how far her technical abilities extended.

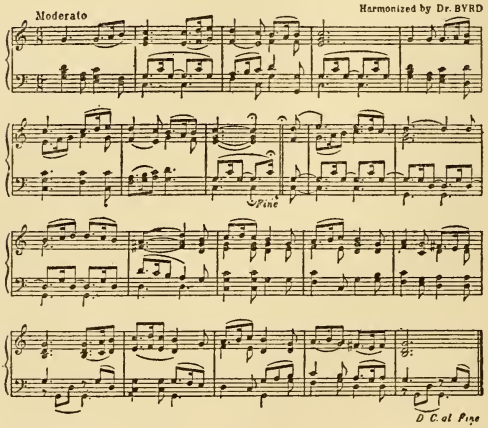
There is a quaint account of her musical conceit left to us by Sir James Melville, who was at one time an ambassador at her court from Queen Mary of Scotland. He

says that as he was about to leave the palace and London an English courtier came to him and asked him if he cared to hear Queen Elizabeth play the virginals. Naturally Sir James responded in the affirmative, whereupon the Englishman led him through a secret passage which ended at a silken curtain. Standing there quietly, after a little while he heard the instrument sounding. Growing bolder he softly entered the room, but the queen heard him and frowned and struck at him. He threw himself upon his knees and begged her pardon for his intrusion, but said that he had ardently desired to hear the queen's great skill at the instrument. Elizabeth was quickly mollified, but asked him which was the better musician, she or his own queen. A diplomat can easily sit on both sides of the fence, and Sir James replied that Mary Stuart played very well for a queen, but that Elizabeth's skill was something amazing. Naturally with this compliment the queen was more than satisfied.

What did she play to him? Unfortunately on this point Sir James is silent, but

there is extant a certain dance which the queen loved greatly, so much so that her music teacher, Dr. Byrd, made an arrangement of it expressly for her. She often played it; she may have played it to Sir James Melville.

SELLINGER'S ROUND



In playing this dance — Sellinger's Round—one must give a constant staccato, as the virginals could neither shade nor sus-

tain a note. The queen seems never to have attempted composition.

* * *

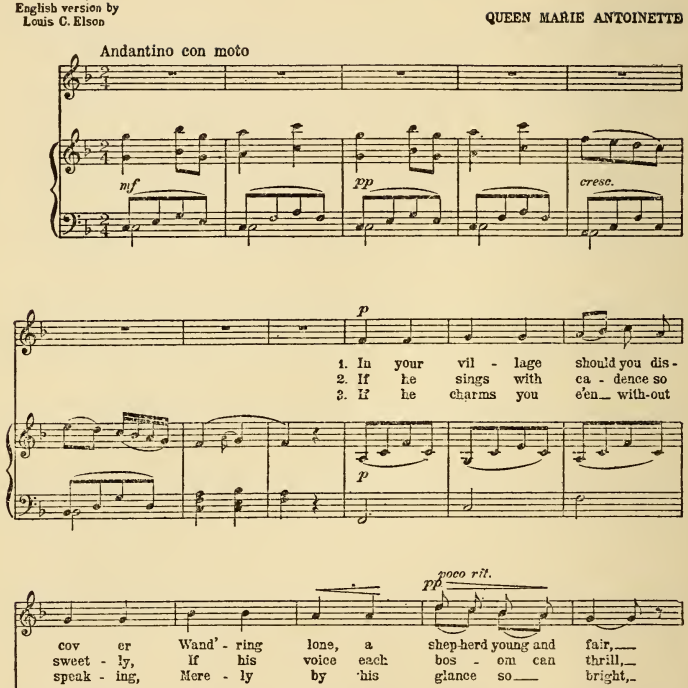
One other queen may appear in our list of composers, however, and a sovereign yet more unfortunate than Anne Boleyn—the unhappy Marie Antoinette. As a child at the Austrian court she had shown musical capacity. She was attracted toward the young boy, Mozart, who played the spinet in Vienna, and romped with her in the palace. She took lessons in music of no less a master than Christoph Willibald Gluck.

Long after, when, in 1775, Gluck was in Paris, there took place one of the greatest musical battles in history. Gluck was trying to establish dramatic music in opera. He maintained that the music in opera should absolutely portray the meaning of the poetry. In this he was the forerunner of Wagner and his music-drama. But the Italians and French were by no means ready to accept this theory, and demanded sweet melody first, foremost, and all the time, irrespective of the text. They set up

'TIS MY FRIEND

FLORIAN
English version by
Louis C. Elson

QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE



FIRST PAGE OF A SONG COMPOSED BY MARIE ANTOINETTE

The complete song will be found in MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS for Vocalists, Vol. VI, p. 1544.

as their champion a very fluent composer, Nicolo Piccini.

In 1779 the rival parties hit upon the idea of having the two composers set the same text to music, and "Iphigenie en Aulide" was the result. Gluck's victory was complete and decisive. The verdict undoubtedly came from the public, but it is also true that had not his old pupil, Queen Marie Antoinette, fought for him during the preceding years he would not have made any headway against his enemies in Paris. Therefore dramatic music owes a debt to this queen that is not generally recognized.

In the queen's own composition—" 'Tis My Friend"—one finds little of this dramatic power, but rather a gentle, pastoral sweetness which is not without its charm.

With this we finish the royal line of musical women. We may now permit the rank and file of female composers to pass in review.

VI

FEMALE COMPOSERS—FANNY MENDELSSOHN AND CLARA SCHUMANN

LET us now examine the list of women who have been actual music composers in the full sense of the word. If I enumerate only those who have been really great in the creation of music, as yet, the list will be very small, while if I give the names of all those who have composed agreeable, pleasing, and correct music, it will be a catalogue as long as a city directory, and about as interesting. I shall therefore confine myself to describing only those who have become, in some degree, epoch-making, and who can serve as models for those women who are at present attempting the thorny path of musical composition.

We must turn to Italy for the earliest name of the list. In Brescia, before 1540, there was born a woman who might have been very great had she lived in the twenti-

eth century, when the opposition to female composers has almost entirely vanished. Maddalena Casulana published two entire volumes of madrigals, in 1568 and 1583, and Vittoria Aleotti, Orsina Vizzani, and Francesca Baglioncella soon followed in the same school.

One must remember that the madrigal was the most severe exhibition of skilful counterpoint. The word has often been misused in later days and its very origin is obscure. Some derive it from madre, mother, and think that it was originally a song in praise of the Virgin; others derive it from mandra, a sheepfold, and think that it was pastoral music, and still others imagine that it was a morning-song of bright character. The true madrigal, however, was always unaccompanied, and the melody was dispersed among the different parts, never being carried on in one voice. At this epoch the composers did not write songs for a single voice—that was left to the people to evolve for themselves (the folk song)—but always composed their vocal music for several voices intertwining. Early in the seven-

teenth century two ladies composed solo songs, which were then called "monody"; these were Francesca Caccini and Barbara Strozzi, both of good family and of fine education. Several Italian women also composed sacred music during the seventeenth century, and this was again severely contrapuntal. By this I mean that several melodies intertwined simultaneously.

Germany gives us one great female name in the sixteenth century, a trifle later than Maddalena Casulana — Madelka Bariona. France had a female composer who may have been contemporaneous with the fair Maddalena, Clementine de Bourges, who composed most excellent and skillful music. Her career was cut short, however, by a great misfortune. She was engaged to a young officer in the royal army, and when this man was slain in an encounter with the Huguenots, in 1560, she at once died of grief.

But it was in the nineteenth century that the real and continuous race of female composers began, and even then the opposition to woman entering this profession was very

great. As recent a musician as Anton Rubinstein found great fault with the attempt of women to become composers, and we shall find a startling instance of this opposition depriving the world of possibly its greatest female composer, in studying the career of Fanny Mendelssohn.

She was the elder sister of the famous Mendelssohn and the two, as children, were the closest chums. They studied their music together and the mother—herself a most cultivated woman—used to say of them, at their piano lessons, "they both have Bach-fugue fingers." At that time there was no thought of either one of them becoming a composer; they were studying music as part of a liberal education. But when Felix Mendelssohn began composition Fanny was as well equipped as he and used to help him by giving him themes and melodies. At a later period she composed many works of her own, chiefly songs and other short musical forms. But her entire family, including her brother, were inflexibly opposed to having a woman composer in the family, and she gently gave way to their dictum, giving

her compositions to her brother, who published some of them as his own.

There is not much doubt that some of the "Songs without Words" were composed by Fanny Mendelssohn. Some of the vocal songs certainly were, as the following anecdote may prove: Mendelssohn had become famous and was, in his adult years, idolized in England. Queen Victoria herself joined in this worship, as did her consort, Prince Albert, himself a composer. They had invited the composer to Windsor Castle where he paid a most informal visit. He had visited the nursery with the royal pair, and then they had gone to the music-room together. Here Queen Victoria offered to sing one of Mendelssohn's songs, and told him that her favorite was "Italy." Mendelssohn blushed and acknowledged that that particular song was composed by his sister Fanny. I give the first page of the song on the following page.

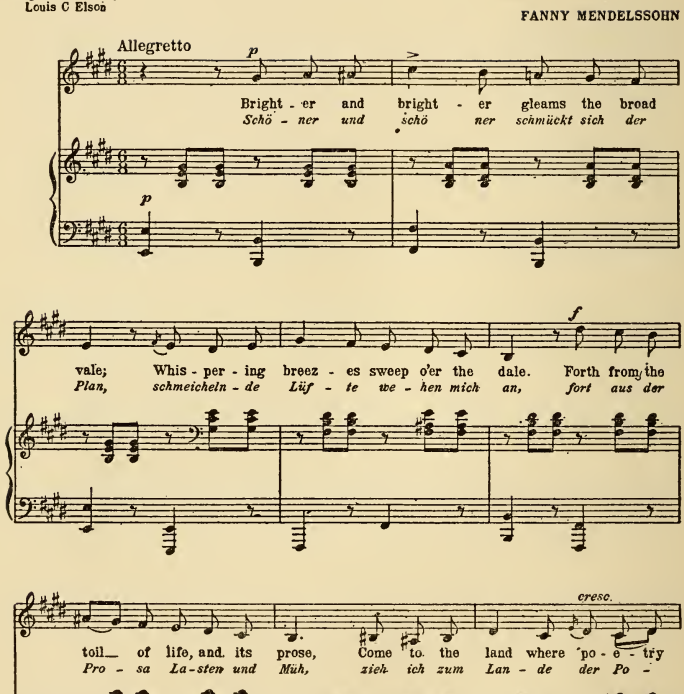
Queen Victoria was twenty-two years old at this time. Mendelssohn asked her to sing the song for him, and he says in one of his letters—"She sang charmingly, in good

ITALY

ITALIEN

English version by
Louis C Elson

FANNY MENDELSSOHN



FIRST PAGE OF A SONG BY FANNY MENDELSSOHN

The complete song will be found in MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS for Vocalists, Vol. VI, p. 1510.

time and tune, and with excellent execution. Only, where it goes down to D [B in the transposed version here given] and comes up again chromatically, she sang D-sharp each time. With the exception of this trifling error it was really beautiful and the long high note near the end I have never heard taken clearer or purer by any amateur. After I had confessed that Fanny had written the song (which I found very hard, but pride goes before a fall) I begged her to sing one of my own works."

The chumship of brother and sister lasted all through their brief lives. How musical was their communion may be shown by a letter written to Fanny when Felix was on the west coast of Scotland. He had just visited Fingal's cave and wrote to his sister: "This is how the island impresses me," and then followed twenty measures of music which afterward became the chief theme, the first measures, of the "Hebrides Overture," where my readers may play them to-day. It was a charming instance of a musician writing to a fellow-musician in that language which goes beyond words.

And thus close in life, in death they were scarcely divided. When the news of Fanny's death was brought to Mendelssohn, he gave a scream and fell down in a swoon. He had burst a blood vessel in his brain. He temporarily recovered and sought recuperation in Italy, but on his return he went to his sister's room, in their dwelling in Berlin, where everything had been carefully kept as when Fanny was alive, and this undid all the benefit of the tour, Mendelssohn dying soon thereafter. Yet with all this affection the brother kept his sister from the career in which she might have shone resplendently. She married a painter named Hensel and lived a domestic life, instead of composing.

* * *

But we can now turn to a greater pair than the Mendelssohns, and find a great composer fostering his wife's talent and taking pride in it. Robert Schumann first met Clara Wieck when she was a mere child, yet a piano prodigy. Among the great affections of the world one constantly reads of Héloïse and Abelard, of Petrarch and

Laura, but beside these the musician may justly place the affection of Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck. Just as Romeo has a fancied love for Rosalind before he meets Juliet, so Schumann had an affection for Ernestine von Fricken before he saw Clara budding into womanhood. As he turned every event of his life into music one can find his love-letter to Ernestine in his Carnival scenes for piano, in which he constantly spells out the name of her birthplace in notes. She was born in the city of Asch, and in the German nomenclature E-flat is called "ES" and B-natural is named "H" —whence "A, ES, C, H." Also A-flat is called "AS," whence we can obtain the variant of "AS, C, H." The reader will be astonished, if he examines Schumann's "Carnaval," to find how much of this great piano suite is founded on these notes, a notable instance of music inspired by female influence. But the greater passion was to produce infinitely greater music. There was trouble and stress enough. Friedrich Wieck, the father of Clara, who had assured Schumann's mother that her son would make a

worthy career in music, found him altogether too doubtful for a son-in-law and opposed the union.

Here we may contradict one of the many false stories regarding musical compositions. The sentimentalists tell a tale regarding Schumann's "Warum?" which is altogether false. They say that Schumann, separated from his Clara by a stern parent, wrote the questioning composition upon a leaf of music paper and sent it to his beloved. She read it and understood its questions—"Why are we separated? Why must we suffer?" and wept over it. She took it to her father and he also wept over it (it must have been rather damp by that time), and he at once sent for Schumann, said "Bless you, my children," and they lived happily ever afterward.

There is not a particle of truth in all this rigmarole. "Warum?" is one of the "Phantasiestücke," a set of eight pieces that were dedicated to Anna Robena Laidlaw, a Scottish woman who was one of Schumann's most gifted pupils. To settle this silly anecdote once for all let me quote a letter of

Schumann to Miss Laidlaw regarding these same pieces. He writes:

> The time of your stay here will always be a most beautiful memory to me, and that this is true you will soon see in eight "Phantasiestücke" for pianoforte that will shortly appear bearing your name upon their forehead. It is true that I have not asked for permission to make this dedication, but they belong to you, and the whole "Rosenthal" with its surroundings of romance is in the music.

The winning of Clara Schumann was a more laborious task than the writing of a composition. Schumann had won the heart of the young lady who was now a pianist of world-wide celebrity; but the father was inflexibly opposed to the match. Schumann therefore tried in every way to achieve fame quickly, that he might thereby win his bride. He went to Vienna, hoping to better his position there. While he was in that city he discovered Schubert's C major symphony, which came very near to being lost to the world. He also visited the grave of Beethoven, and found a pen upon the tomb. It was an odd discovery, and Schumann, being

very impressible, saved that mysterious pen and wrote his first symphony with it. He gave a set of musical lectures in a German university, that he might receive from it the title of "Doctor," and his letter notifying Clara of his being "Doctor Schumann" is full of glee.

But the final victory was won by means very different from the composition of "Warum?" In some parts of Germany it was legal, if a couple were desirous of matrimony, were both of legal age, and were opposed by the parents, for the young man to bring suit requiring the opposing parents to show cause why the marriage should not take place; and if it was proved that there was no real impediment, and that the would-be bridegroom was able to support a family, the court "advised" the parents to give their consent. This "advice" was equivalent to a command, and this is the way in which Schumann won his bride.

After the marriage—in 1840—Schumann burst forth into song. He wrote a cycle of songs entitled "Poet's Love" and followed it up with his most joyous and triumphant

symphony, the one in B-flat. But the cycle which was most directly inspired by Clara Schumann was that entitled "Woman's Life and Love." This cycle of songs was almost a prophecy. It pictures the awakening of love, the struggle for union, the marriage, and then the death of the husband, and at the end the composer brings back the first themes—the awakening of love as if the widow only lived in the memory of her dead husband. It all came true in later years, and Clara Schumann lived on, after her husband had died in an insane asylum, only with the purpose of making his greatness known to the world, a task in which she succeeded gloriously.

But Schumann did not, as Mendelssohn, try to oppose the female composer. In fact he effaced himself sometimes so thoroughly that once, in Russia, when Clara Schumann had made a brilliant success in a concert, both as pianist and composer, an effusive nobleman, after showering his compliments upon Mme. Schumann, turned to the husband, who stood by, and asked: "Are you, also, musical?"

Schumann published some of his wife's songs with his own, but always under her own name. Clara Schumann composed in almost every branch of musical form. It is not too much to say that probably she is the greatest female composer who has as yet arisen. Concerts have been given, made up entirely of her compositions. She composed chamber-music, piano works, many songs, a piano concerto, etc. Her trio in G-minor for piano, violin and violoncello holds its own against any masculine compositions.

She devoted much of her life, however, to making her husband's work known, and his piano concerto, the piano quintette, Op. 44, and the piano quartet, owe their acceptance chiefly to her.

In her tastes Mme. Schumann was decidedly conservative. Her grandson, Ferdinand Schumann, has recently published extracts from her diary, which show this very clearly. She was a decided Brahmsite, and Brahms was always an intimate friend of the Schumann family. Mme. Schumann and he were "Clara" and "Johannes" to each other, and it was natural that she

should have imbibed some of the master's Toryism in Music. How far that conservatism extended with Brahms may be judged by the following incident. He had been a warm friend of Herman Levi, who was a man of the broadest musical culture, conducting Wagner's operas and revising those of Mozart with equal fidelity. One day, in conversation with Brahms, Levi spoke of Gluck and of Wagner, whereupon Brahms angrily exclaimed: "These two names are not to be spoken in the same breath!" and brusquely left the room, becoming antagonistic to Levi from that time.

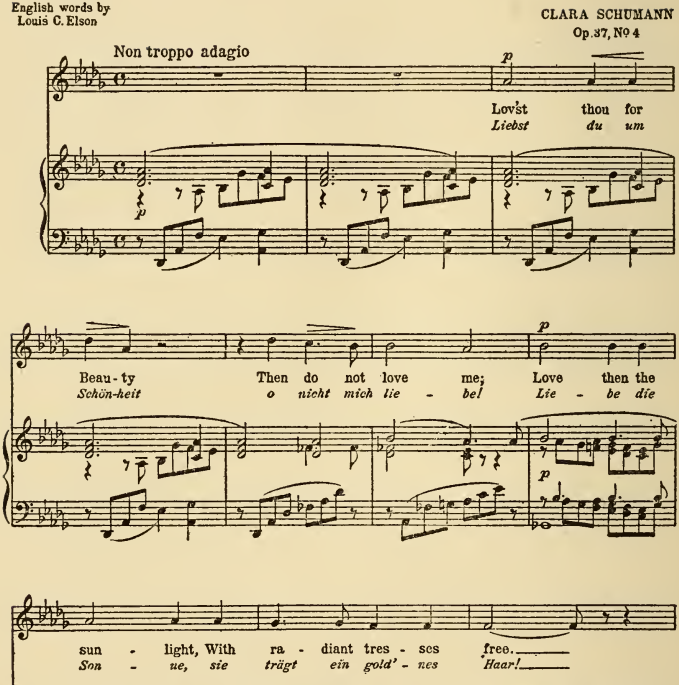
Mme. Schumann, in her old age, had somewhat similar ideas. She told Stockhausen that although Wagner was a genius, his music would one day totally disappear. It was, she thought, too unhealthy,—the coloring good, but the drawing bad. But one might make an endless list of the mistakes of composers in criticism, for Tschaikowsky despised Beethoven's latest quartets. Brahms scorned Bruckner, Handel had a contempt for Gluck and Purcell, Mozart derided Abt Vogler, Beethoven sneered at

LOVST THOU FOR BEAUTY

LIEBST DU UM SCHÖNHEIT

FR. RÜCKERT
English words by
Louis C. Elson

CLARA SCHUMANN
Op. 37, No 4



FIRST PAGE OF A SONG BY CLARA SCHUMANN

It will be apparent to the reader, by this song, how much Clara Schumann was influenced by the vein of her husband's composition. Were this song published without the composer's name, many a critic would ascribe it to Robert Schumann. The complete song will be found in MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS for Vocalists, Vol. VI, p. 1548.

Weber, Weber thought Beethoven quite fit for an asylum, and one might extend the list much further. But Mme. Schumann was probably the best female pianist that has lived, and her personal character was most lovable. Therefore, of all the female composers I am inclined to give the first place to Clara Josephine Schumann.

A good example of her style, which much resembles that of her great husband, is found in "Love'st Thou for Beauty," the first page of which is found on the accompanying page.

VII

OTHER EUROPEAN FEMALE COMPOSERS

GERMANY has not been so definitely preëminent in music and its women composers as with its male geniuses. It is probable that Clara Schumann will head the list for some time to come. The nation's appreciation of her was evidenced at her jubilee, which marked the completion of fifty years of labor in the field of music. Enthusiastic crowds attended the concert she gave on that occasion. She played her husband's piano concerto, and at the end was presented with a gold crown, on each laurel leaf of which was inscribed the name of some famous composer. This gifted woman always preferred to be known as Schumann's widow, rather than as a composer in her own right, and to the last she played his compositions in preference to her own.

In Germany royalty has always busied itself somewhat with music, and almost every queen or princess has composed to some ex-

tent. It is unnecessary to give the list here. It begins with the sister of Frederic the Great, the Princess Anna Amalia, and extends to the Princess Beatrice of Battenberg. But in Austria in the eighteenth century, we find a woman composer who may well be balanced against even some of the great masters. Maria Theresa von Paradies was born in Vienna in 1759. She met with an accident at the age of three, which caused her to be blind for life. The Empress Maria Theresa heard her, when she was eleven years old, singing a soprano air from Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater," and playing her own accompaniment upon the organ, and was so impressed by the excellence of her work that she took the girl under her protection and procured the best teachers for her. Maria Theresa von Paradies became very prominent as a performer, but soon retired from the public stage to devote herself to composition. She composed several sonatas, operas, etc., of considerable merit. Mozart admired her compositions, and showed his esteem by dedicating one of his concertos to her.

Another Viennese lady, Marianne Martinez, left a large list of compositions, including an oratorio. The compositions of these ladies, when preserved, are regarded rather as curiosities than as living numbers of the repertory. In the nineteenth century Germany gives us Emilie Mayer, Agnes Bernouilly, and a long list of lesser celebrities. Perhaps the most noted woman composer at the end of the nineteenth century was Louisa Adolpha Lebeau. She was born at Rastadt in 1850, and has recently lived in Baden-Baden. Her compositions have won prizes, and have become in some degree standard in Germany. She has composed in all the large forms of music, but her best work has been in chamber music, her string quartets being of excellent quality.

Americans might recall to mind, when they are singing the ever-popular "Soldier's Farewell," that this chorus, and a cantata, too, are the work of a woman—Johanna Kinkel. Another excellent composer is Ingeborg Stark. She was born in St. Petersburg, or Petrograd, of Swedish

parents, but belongs to Germany because her life-work has been chiefly done there. Ingeborg Stark went to Liszt at Weimar, a beautiful northern girl who seemed much more adapted to society than to the stern work of composition. Liszt looked at the compositions she had brought, and perhaps doubting them somewhat, gave her a fugal subject to write up as a test. She at once worked on the theme in good counterpoint and handed it to the master. He played it, acknowledged that it was good, but added: "You don't look at all like that"; whereupon the young lady replied, "I should hope that I didn't look like a fugue!" This retort won Liszt's admiration and he was always interested in her work thereafter. A scion of noble family fell in love with Miss Stark, and she soon became Ingeborg von Bronsart, the name by which she is known throughout Germany. There are literally dozens of German ladies who are composing good songs and piano pieces today, but to give the list would serve no purpose whatever.

England also has an extremely long list of

good women composers. Let me speak only of the greatest of these. The two chief ones bear the name of Smith, and when we remember that the composer of the tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner" was an Englishman named John Stafford Smith, it will be seen that the Smith family are to be honored in English music, and that Oliver Wendell Holmes's line, "Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith," has lost its point. Alice Mary Smith (1839-84) composed symphonies, concertos and fine chamber music which is deservedly popular. Ethel M. Smyth (a slight deviation from "Smith") has won about as high a reputation as any other woman composer. She has composed operas which have become standard. Her one-act opera "Der Wald," has been given in Germany, England, and America; and her three-act work, "The Wreckers," began a triumphant career in Germany just before the war.

The daughter of an English general, Miss Smyth was born in London, April 23, 1858. Her music is modern in the sense that it follows Wagnerian continuity, but it is free

from the ugliness which permeates so much latter-day music. She has composed very much besides the two operas mentioned, especially a beautiful Mass, an opera entitled "Fantasio," and many other works. Perhaps the future will rank Miss Smyth as the greatest woman composer of the present.

Agnes Zimmermann, born in Cologne, but closely identified with England in her musical career, has composed violin sonatas, instrumental trios, etc. The names of Liza Lehmann, Frances Allitsen, Guy d'Hardelot (Mrs. Rhodes), and Maude Valerie White may be mentioned as prominent in the smaller forms of composition.

France gives a long list of women composers also, but among these two stand preeminent. Augusta Mary Ann Holmès was born at Paris in 1847, and died there in 1903. She was of Irish parentage, but afterward became naturalized as a Frenchwoman. She has been larger in her musical conceptions than any other woman composer of the present. Opera, symphony, overture, triumphal odes, have all been composed by this great Irishwoman. She has

been more virile in thought and broader in execution than many male composers. Her name, originally "Holmes," has been Gallicized into "Hol-mès," with two syllables and a French pronunciation.

The other most prominent French woman composer is Cécile Louise Stéphanie Chaminade, whose name is known all over the civilized world. She was born in Paris in 1861. When Ambroise Thomas heard some of her earliest compositions he remarked: "This is not a woman who composes, but a composer who happens to be a woman." Bizet also was full of encomium for her early work. Perhaps the best point in Mlle. Chaminade's work is its grace and fluency. She has not yielded to the temptation to do something overwhelming, but has generally kept to the smaller forms, of which she is a complete master. Yet she has done one or two large works with success, notably a grand ballet and symphonic scene, entitled "Callirrhoë," and a piano concerto. But it is her short piano pieces, and also her poetic songs, which have won her a fame that is now world-wide.

VIII

WOMEN COMPOSERS OF AMERICA

IT may be well again to repeat that no attempt is made in these articles to give a list of women who have become prominent in music, but only to point out some shining examples which may serve as guides to those who are following in the tonal path. It is pleasant to note that America has given brilliant examples. In America there has never been the prejudice which has opposed the entrance of women into the field of musical creation, the prejudice which caused Rubinstein to say to the brother-in-law of Chaminade, "I hear you have a sister-in-law who is composing music. *She ought not to do that!*"

About one hundred and fifty names might be cited of American women who have done creditable work in composition, but only the leaders can be mentioned. Margaret Ruthven Lang, the daughter of that eminent musician, B. J. Lang, was born November 27,

1867. Brought up as she was in a musical family, she began composing at the age of twelve. She studied with John K. Paine, J. C. D. Parker, and George W. Chadwick. Her orchestral works, chiefly overtures, have been performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and by Theodore Thomas's orchestra. She has composed in many of the larger musical forms. Her most recent compositions have been chiefly songs.

Miss Lang has done some piquant and excellent work in the domain of children's songs, which, although intended for juveniles, will certainly interest children of a larger growth. Her settings of Lear's Limericks, and of "Grandma's Song Book," are only comparable with Liza Lehmann's daintily humorous works in England.

An American woman-composer who is of great promise is Miss Mabel Daniels. She is unaffected in her work, melodic yet sufficiently developed to interest the musician. She is also an authoress and has written a very interesting volume of musical life in Germany. Her father, although a prominent merchant, was much interested in music

Margaret Sutherland

and was for some time president of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston.

Miss Grace Marshall was born near Nineveh, Indiana, in 1885. After music-study in Boston she became the wife of Mr. Clough-Leiter, who is himself a prominent American composer. She has hidden her identity under the cacophonic name of G. Marscal-Loepke, and has written many charming juvenile pieces and also much more ambitious work.

Mary Turner Salter, born in Peoria, Ill., in 1856, has done good work in several original songs which have made their way into concerts of the highest rank. She is also the wife of a prominent musician—Mr. Sumner Salter. She is, thank Heaven, not given to dissonant progressions or mystic musical riddles in the modern vein.

Helen Hopekirk (Mrs. William Wilson), although Scottish by birth has resided so long in America that she may be spoken of under the classification of American composers. She was born in Edinburgh, May 20th, 1856, and won much success as a pianist in Europe before coming to Amer-

ica. For more than twenty years she has been resident in Boston where she is a prominent teacher. She has composed an excellent piano concerto, a Concertstück for piano and orchestra, many piano works, a large number of songs, has arranged many of the Scottish folk songs, and has received success in all these varied fields. There is a strength and virility in her works that places all of them in a very high rank.

Gena Branscombe deserves mention as being beautifully melodic in her work and having a degree of expressiveness that puts her in the class of Cécile Chaminade. And this is, fortunately, the good influence which many American female-composers are exerting upon our Art at present: while some of the native males are trying to out-Herod Herod by terrific progressions and impossible chord resolutions, while the motto of most of them is "Leave Richter behind, all Ye who enter Here," while the only deceptive cadence left in their music is to resolve the dominant chord into the tonic,—the American woman-composers have upheld the banner of "Beauty in Music," and may yet suc-

FAY FOSTER

ceed in guiding their masculine brethren from the thorny paths which they have chosen.

It is almost an injustice to give especial names where so many have succeeded in this pleasant field. Generally the composers have chosen the smaller forms, songs or piano works of drawing-room calibre. Lola Carrier Worrell, Eleanor Freer, Mary Knight Wood, Helen Hood, Fay Foster, Cara Roma, Mana Zucca, Amy Woodford-Finden, Mrs. Carrie Jacobs-Bond, Jessie L. Gaynor, Mary Helen Brown, Edith Noyes-Green, and a host of others have done good work. Perhaps they will yet teach the more radical composers the truth of Beethoven's sentence: "Music, even when picturing something that is ugly, must itself remain beautiful."

* * *

THE MOST prominent female figure in American music is Mrs. H. H. A. Beach. Here we find a woman who requires not the slightest concession on account of her sex. She has written many works which are standard and which have won recognition in

their own right. Her maiden name was Amy Marcy Cheney, and she was born in Henniker, New Hampshire, September 5, 1867. She is a descendant from the early colonial settlers, and belongs to one of the oldest American families. She had the sense of absolute pitch (the ability to name a note the instant it is sounded) from the very beginning, and is said to have astonished her family with this gift when she was still a baby. At a very early period she was able to sing some forty different songs, although her favorite was the old anthem, "The Moon Shines Full at His Command." She would sternly correct any deviations in the singing of any of these songs with the command, "Sing it clean."

At two years of age she was taken to be photographed. While sitting and waiting for the focusing of the camera she suddenly burst out singing, "See the Conquering Hero Comes," to the utter amazement of the photographer.

From the age of four the precocious Miss Cheney was allowed access to the piano, and she played with full harmony the hymn

tunes she had heard in church. She also made up a few pieces of her own, which she named "Mamma's Waltz," "Snowflake Waltz," etc. She could transpose easily at this time. I recall meeting her when she had begun systematic work under a teacher, and well remember her transposing a Bach fugue to any key that I called for. She studied with Ernst Perabo, Junius W. Hill and Carl Baermann. Her teachers justly considered her the greatest musical prodigy of America. It is a point worth noting that this great woman-composer was entirely trained in America. There was an intention of sending her abroad when she grew up, but a wealthy physician, Dr. H. H. A. Beach, frustrated this plan by marrying her. The struggle of the rising composer was thus entirely eliminated from her life. She was a fine pianist, she had appeared in public at sixteen years of age—she was then still Miss Cheney—and she even appeared on the programs of the Boston Symphony concerts. After her marriage she appeared only for charitable purposes, but fortunately with some frequency.

Mrs. Beach has composed in all the musical forms, large and small. Her song, "The Year's at the Spring," is known everywhere, and her other songs and piano works are very numerous. She has, like Augusta Holmès, won laurels in much vaster compositions. Her first work of great dimensions was a Grand Mass in E-flat major, performed by the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, in 1892.

Another of her great works is the "Gaelic Symphony," which has been performed by the chief American orchestras. It was completed in 1896 and is made up of several genuine Gaelic themes. A sonata in A minor for violin and piano also deserves mention. Numerous works have been written by Mrs. Beach for public occasions and festivals. I consider Mrs. Beach's piano concerto in C-sharp minor to be a remarkable composition. Its Scherzo is altogether charming, and the Finale is most powerful. She has written some excellent cantatas for women's voices. "The Sea Fairies" and "The Chambered Nautilus" among them, and a piano quintet. Some quaint Eskimo pieces for piano are

made on actual Eskimo themes. Other important works of Mrs. Beach are "Variations on a Balkan Theme" and the "Festival Jubilate," the latter written for the dedicatory exercises of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. One of the most interesting things about Mrs. Beach's creative activity is the astonishing rapidity with which she is able to compose.

I may well close my discursive writings about woman in music with the important figure of Mrs. Beach. This composer is not only an American, but also an entirely American art product. It is reasonable to believe that with the freedom that is accorded the woman-composer among us, with the numerous great conservatories here opening wide their doors to women and offering them the most thorough instruction, America may yet bring forth a woman-composer of the magnitude of Mozart, Chopin, or Haydn.

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